

Response Under 37 CFR 1.116  
Expedited Procedure  
Examining Group 3679  
Application No. 10/582,809  
Paper Dated: May 18, 2009  
In Reply to USPTO Correspondence of February 20, 2009  
Attorney Docket No. 0388-061722

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

#### Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A pipe joint construction comprising an elastic seal member for hermetically sealing between an inner circumferential surface of a receiving pipe section and an outer circumferential surface of an inserted pipe section inserted into and connected to the receiving pipe section in a pipe axis direction, and a lock member provided interior to the inner circumferential surface of the receiving pipe section adjacent a receiving opening thereof for preventing separating movement of the pipe sections by contacting an engaging projection protruding from the outer circumferential surface of the inserted pipe section in the pipe axis direction,

wherein the construction further comprises an attachment/detachment control device for attaching and detaching the lock member to/from the receiving pipe section by rotating the lock member about the pipe axis direction relative to a rotating operation passage of a rotating operation guide groove formed in ~~the~~ an inner circumferential surface of the receiving opening of the receiving pipe section and by moving, in the pipe axis direction, the lock member placed in a specific attachment/detachment operating position in a passage of rotation,

the attachment/detachment control device includes a plurality of circumferentially divided control members insertable and removable in the pipe axis direction through a space between the outer circumferential surface of the inserted pipe section and the inner circumferential surface of the receiving pipe section, and a plurality of circumferentially extending split lock pieces forming the lock member and dispersedly formed on the control members, and the receiving pipe section includes, formed adjacent a receiving opening end thereof, attachment/detachment recesses for allowing insertion and removal of the split lock pieces in the pipe axis direction, and retainer wall portions for contacting the split lock pieces in the pipe axis direction when the split lock pieces inserted through the attachment/detachment

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recesses are rotated about the pipe axis direction to a predetermined attachment position thereby to prevent disengaging movement of the lock pieces,

the pipe joint construction further comprises a return preventive device provided for receiving the split lock pieces in positions advanced on a removing side in the pipe axis direction in the rotating operation passage when the split lock pieces inserted into the receiving pipe section are rotated along the rotating operation passage, and for preventing or restraining a relative rotation of the split lock pieces in a receiving position toward the specific attachment/detachment operating position, and

the pipe joint construction further comprises an elastic urging element provided between the split lock pieces and the receiving pipe section in the rotating operation passage, and provided for urging the split lock pieces to the receiving position of the return preventive device while being brought into contact with the split lock pieces and the receiving pipe section in the pipe axis direction.

2. (Original) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, further comprising a stopper wall portion formed in the inner circumferential surface of the receiving pipe section at a portion close to the receiving opening from a seal mounting groove for receiving the elastic seal member to contact an engaging projection protruding from the outer circumferential surface of the inserted pipe section in the pipe axis direction, thereby to limit a maximum contracting position between the pipe sections.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, wherein the split lock pieces are formed on outer circumferential surfaces of the control members with engaging portions extending beyond an inner diameter of the receiving opening of the receiving pipe section.

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5. (Previously Presented) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, wherein the control members include flange portions formed at outward end portions thereof for closing or substantially closing an annular space between the inner circumferential surface of the receiving pipe section and the outer circumferential surface of the inserted pipe section.

6. (Previously Presented) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, wherein each control member has a control pinching portion formed on an outward end portion thereof.

7. (Previously Presented) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, wherein each control member comprises a pair of semicylindrical elements to be fitted along the outer circumferential surface of the inserted pipe section.

8. (Previously Presented) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, wherein the control members and the split lock pieces have a circumferential width to pass through the attachment/detachment recesses in the receiving pipe section, and wherein space limiting members made of a synthetic resin to have a circumferential width to pass through the attachment/detachment recesses in the receiving pipe section in the pipe axis direction are disposed between adjacent control members inserted into the receiving pipe section through the attachment/detachment recesses.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) A pipe joint construction as defined in claim 1, wherein the return preventive device includes recesses formed in the split lock pieces into which part of the receiving pipe section is relatively engageable in the pipe axis direction when the split lock pieces are in the predetermined attachment position of the rotating operation passage.

11. (Cancelled)